



Prairie Notes

Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

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Children and Severe Emotional Disturbances (SED)

Severe Emotional Disturbances (SED) is a term used to identify children up to age 18 who have been diagnosed with a severe behavioral, emotional or mental health disorder (DSM-IV-TR). "Severe" means that there has been a major impairment in a child's level of functioning at home, in school, or in the community lasting for a year or longer.

Mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders that occur in children and adolescents include: anxiety disorders, mood disorders including depression and bipolar, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, conduct disorder, and thought disorders.

Causes of Mental Health Disorders in Children and Adolescents¹

- Biological - Genetics, chemical imbalances, damage to the central nervous system
- Environment - Exposure to violence, extreme stress, loss of an important person, and other related environmental factors
- Combination of both

National Information

One in ten children and adolescents suffer from mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment. But only one in five receive needed treatment.²

- Anxiety Disorder affects 13% of adolescents (ages 9-17)
- Major Depression affects 2% of children (ages 0-8) and 8% of adolescents
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder affects 5% of children
- Conduct Disorder affects 4% of adolescents

Nationally, 12,700 children were placed in the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems in order to access needed mental health services.³

State Information/Data

- In 2004, of 138,955 children and adolescents in North Dakota, approximately 5,697 (4%) had a serious emotional disturbance.⁴
- The number of children and adolescents in North Dakota diagnosed with serious emotional disturbance who received publicly funded services through the Human Service Centers in FY 2005 was 1,692 and 1,538 in SFY 2006.⁴
- Effective service delivery occurs with collaboration between Regional Human Service Centers, the Division of Juvenile Services, local school districts, special education districts, County Social Services, Juvenile Court, parents, private and public providers, and advocacy groups across the state.
- The mental health system is in reality a mix of multiple agency services.

Implications

- North Dakota's public education system is challenged because "the number of emotionally disturbed children enrolled in special education programs more than doubled between 1993 and 2004 in North Dakota."⁵

- In a declining child and adolescent population, North Dakota's children are presenting with more complex issues at an earlier age.

Department/Community Response

The Children's Mental Health System of Care in North Dakota (also referred to as the *Partnerships Program for Children's Mental Health*) provides therapeutic and supportive services to children with SED and their families so they can manage their illness and live in the community in the least restrictive setting.

The "Wraparound" process is a nationally recognized promising practice in the field of mental health and other systems of care partners that provide comprehensive community-based services. Children needing less intensive services are served by other units at the Human Service Centers.

The "Wraparound" process, a strength-based approach to service delivery, improves the functioning of children who have complex needs, through a set of core elements:

- 1) Individualized plans of care
- 2) Culturally competent and tailored to the unique needs of families
- 3) Parental involvement
- 4) Strength-based
- 5) Least restrictive setting

Links/Outside Resources

Mental Health: The Surgeon General's Report:

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/toc.html> - chapter3

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services <http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/>

Surgeon General <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/cre/execsummary-1.html>

North Dakota 2007 Mental Health Block Grant

<http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/mhsa/20060831-block-grantapplication-cmhs2007.pdf>

Center for Mental Health Services <http://www.mentalhealth.org/cmhs>

Child Trends <http://www.childtrends.org/index.cfm>

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry <http://www.aacap.org/>

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health <http://www.ffcmh.org/>

National Institute of Mental Health <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>

National Mental Health Association <http://www.nmha.org/>

¹ Children's Mental Health Facts: Children and Adolescents with Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders by SAMHSA National Mental Health information Center <http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/CA-0006/default.asp>

² Prevalence of serious emotional disturbance in children and adolescents. *Mental Health, United States, 1996*. Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996.

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1999). *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

⁴ North Dakota 2007 Mental Health Block Grant

⁵ North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, as cited in North Dakota Kid's Count "Inform," Volume 4, Number 3, May 2006 http://www.ndkidscount.org/publications/inform/4_3Inform.pdf

"Our mission is to provide quality, efficient and effective human services, which improve the lives of people."